

LUTON STUMBLE IN SIGHT OF TRIUMPH

By P. J. MOSS
Luton 2, Sunderland 2

THOUGH snow, frost, fog, treacherous turf, rain and the slope of the ground all took a hand in influencing the course of the game, Luton very nearly brought off a surprise win. Two up—it should have been three at the breather—they went all out in the early stages of the second half and nearly did the trick.



Luton players (white shirts) giving Mapson, Sunderland goalie plenty to do.

On the frozen turf in the first half, and playing uphill, Sunderland were out of the hunt. The Luton forwards and halves were always on top of their game, and Dolman in the Luton goal held a watching brief.

After Mapson had made great saves from Roberts and Sloan and Luton had forced four corners, a long cross from Hodge to Roberts ended with a shot that Mapson could not reach.

Payne missed a chance, but from a long punt up field by Dolman he flicked the ball to Sloan, whose cross kick gave Roberts his second great chance, and Luton were two up.

Hodge should have got another from an open goal. He dallied—thinking, I believe, he was offside—and Mapson cleared.

INSISTENT RAIDS

Luton started the second half confidently, but Sunderland were now playing downhill, and with the rain softening the turf and giving them a foot-hold, their raids were insistent.

In fourteen minutes Connor scored from Gurney's pass after a real Sunderland run—almost the first in the match. This put the team on their toes and all ranks went into the attack.

In another fine bout of passing Gurney got a touch to a centre from Connor and Duns, dashing up from the left, beat Dolman at close range.

After this it was a great fight for the mastery, but by now the Sunderland defence was the sounder, and Connor twice nearly got the winning goal. Even so, Mapson had more to do than Dolman.

Last incident of the match was a determined onslaught by the Luton forwards. Payne and Hodge tested Mapson at close range, and as the goalkeeper fisted out, Roberts fired just the wrong side of the post—and perhaps the best opening of the game was missed.

Nelson and Johnston, the respective centre halves, were the best players on the field. Neither gave the opposing centre forward an inch of room.